

Home - Bulletin of Information

Eligibility

Eligibility for the USMLE Steps

Step 1 and Step 2 CK

To be eligible, you must be in one of the following categories at the time you apply **AND** on the day of your examination:

- a medical student officially enrolled in, or a graduate of, a US or Canadian medical school program leading to the MD degree that is accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), OR
- a medical student officially enrolled in, or a graduate of, a US medical school leading to the DO degree that is accredited by the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA), OR
- a medical student officially enrolled in, or a graduate of, a medical school that is outside the US and Canada, listed in the [World Directory of Medical Schools](#) as meeting ECFMG eligibility requirements, and that meets other eligibility criteria of the ECFMG




If you are dismissed or withdraw(n) from medical school, you are not eligible for the USMLE, even if you are appealing the school's decision or are otherwise contesting your status. If you are on a leave of absence, please check with the organization that registered you for your examination before submitting your application; if you have already registered, check before testing. Failure to notify the organization that registered you for your examination of your changed status may result in a determination that you engaged in irregular behavior and placement of a permanent annotation on your score reports and transcripts.

Step 3

Eligibility requirements for Step 3 are:

- Passing scores on Step 1 and Step 2 CK, **AND**
- An MD degree or the DO degree from an LCME- or COCA-accredited US or Canadian medical school, **OR** the equivalent of the MD degree from a medical school outside the US and Canada that is listed in the [World Directory of Medical Schools](#) as meeting ECFMG eligibility requirements and obtain ECFMG Certification, **AND**
- Meet all other eligibility criteria as listed in the USMLE *Bulletin of Information*

The USMLE program recommends that, for Step 3 eligibility, applicants should have completed, or be near completion of, at least one postgraduate training year in an accredited US graduate medical education program that meets state board licensing requirements.

 **If you have attempted a Step four or more times, including incomplete attempts, and have not passed, you are ineligible to apply for any Step in the USMLE exam sequence. Attempts at the formerly administered Step 2 CS count toward the limit.**

Change in Eligibility Status

If your eligibility for a Step changes after you submit your application but before your scheduled test date(s), you must promptly notify the organization that registered you for your examination. Failure to notify the organization that registered you for your examination of your change in status may result in a finding that you engaged in irregular behavior. If you take a Step for which you are not eligible, results for that examination may not be reported or, if previously reported, may be canceled, at the discretion of the USMLE program.

Graduates From Unaccredited Medical Schools in the US or Canada

If you graduated from an unaccredited medical school in the US or Canada and are eligible for initial licensure as a physician by a US medical licensing authority, you may take the USMLE only upon specific request by that physician licensing authority. The physician licensing authority should submit the request to sponsor you to the USMLE Secretariat in advance of your application for each Step.

Sequence of Steps

If you meet the eligibility requirements, you may take Step 1 and Step 2 CK in any sequence. You may take Step 3 only after passing Step 1 and Step 2 CK.

Number of Attempts and Time Limits

If you have attempted a Step four or more times, including incomplete attempts, and have not passed, you are ineligible to apply for **any** Step in the USMLE exam sequence. Attempts at the formerly administered Step 2 CS count toward the limit.

All attempts at a Step are counted toward the limit, regardless of when the examinations were taken.

Many state medical boards require that all Steps of the USMLE exam sequence be successfully completed within a certain time frame.

Information regarding state-specific requirements for licensure can be obtained on the [FSMB website](#). Note: combined degree (e.g., MD/PhD) students should reference the [USMLE website](#) for more specific information regarding exceptions to time limits.

Retaking Failed Examinations

You may not take the same Step more than three times within a 12-month period. Your fourth attempt must be at least 12 months after your first attempt at that examination and at least six months after your most recent attempt at that examination. This includes incomplete attempts.

Retaking Previously Passed Steps

If you pass a Step, you are not allowed to retake it, except to comply with a time limit imposed by a US physician licensing authority for completion of all Steps or by another authority recognized by the USMLE program. Visit the USMLE website for more information.

If you have not yet passed Step 3 and need to retake a previously passed Step 1 or Step 2 CK examination to meet a time limit imposed by a US physician licensing authority or another

authority recognized by the USMLE program, you should understand that if you fail a retake, you will no longer be eligible to take Step 3. To meet the examination requirements for Step 3 eligibility, you must have achieved a passing performance on the *most recent administration* of the examinations intended to meet those requirements.

Previously Licensed Physicians

If you have already been granted a physician license by a US medical licensing authority based on other licensure examinations, such as the Federation Licensing Examination (FLEX), the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination, NBME certifying examinations, or National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners COMLEX-USA, you may not be eligible to take the USMLE. Please contact the appropriate registration organization with questions about your eligibility.

[Next Section](#)



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[Step 2 CK](#)

[Step 3](#)

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